TO

THOMAS MIFFLIN,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.

SIR,

DURING the profecution of my experiments on Canal operations, which are exhibited in the preceding treatife, I frequently contemplated their great importance to the States of America, and much wifhed to awaken the public mind to a full fenfe of the fubject; but, on confidering the habits of the people of the interior country, accuftomed only to land carriage, I feared much difficulty would arife in removing the prejudice in favour of waggoning, and in raifing a fum of money adequate to the firft expence of a canal of importance. In deliberating on the mode of furmounting thefe obftacles, I was fo fortunate as to meet with your Addrefs to the Houfe of Reprefentatives in 1795, and particularly happy to find your ideas, of the importance of eafy communications between remote parts of the country, fo confonant to my own, and at the fame time fo earneftly recommended to the public attention: which circumftance has urged me to addrefs this Chapter to you, convinced that your fenfe of the fubject will not fuffer any obfervations which may be ufeful to lie dormant.

I muft therefore requeft you deliberately to perufe the fyftem laid down, which you will find, by Chapter VII. totally explodes the old practice, for two reafons: *Firft*, Becaufe they may be conftructed for half the fum neceffary to a lock canal; and, *Secondly*, Becaufe on them you may perform difpatch, and pafs through the moft mountainous country at the fpeed of fix miles per hour; an advantage

advantage which lock canals can never give, and which precludes an immenfity of carriage: yet the fmall canal takes in every kind of conveyance, and performs the double office of a canal and road; therefore, if founded and governed by found principles, a mountainous country may have all the bleffings of water conveyance, fo celebrated in the level and fertile plains of Egypt. But how to extend thefe conveniencies into every corner and diftrict of America, is now to be confidered.

While the mind hovers over the immenfe continent of America, and views its vaft interior, inhabited in various diftricts remote from the marts of trade, with infinite fcenes for the improvement and nourifhment of millions of human beings, philanthrophy feeks to combine the exertions of the prefent inhabitants to facilitate their labour, extend their interefts, invite population, and give a cultivating hand to every acre of that extenfive territory.

To fuch a wifh, in one point of view, is prefented a great and fertile country, interfperfed with luxuriant vales and numerous mountains, nourifhing infinite rivulets, which, meandring the country, feed long and rugged rivers, diminifhing to naked fhoals in dry feafons, or fwelling to roaring torrents in time of rain; preffing their way through ftupendous cliffs and infinite rocks, prefent objects hoftile to navigating the ftreams of nature.

But fuch are the materials which art muft bring into unifon; the performance of which is a fubject the moft benevolent and important, and worthy the ferious contemplation of the penetrating members of fociety, as a great national queftion.

On this head it muft be evident, that in proportion as produce is remote from market its value is diminifhed, in confequence of the

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